

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 6-9 and 11-14, and 16-19 are pending in the present application. Claims 11-13, 18, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a), and claims 1-3, 6-9, 14, 16, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Claims 1 and 11 are amended. The rejections are respectfully traversed in light of the following remarks, and reconsideration is requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 102(a)

Claims 11-13, 18, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Suda et al. (USPN 6,053,980). Suda et al. discloses, in Figs. 1A, 1B, 2, and 3, that the load lock chamber 52 is located between the process chamber 56 and the transport device 20 and transport module 10. In other words, there is not a direct connection from the transport module 10 and transport device 20 to the process chamber 56. As a result, for a wafer to be moved from the transport module 10 to the process chamber 56, the wafer must first be moved through the load lock 52.

In contrast, claim 11, as amended, recites "a processing system including a transport module, a load lock, and a process chamber, wherein the process chamber is located directly adjacent to the transport module; said semiconductor wafer transport device being configured to deliver said semiconductor wafer directly to said load lock or said process chamber". As seen from Figs. 2A and 2B of Applicant's specification, the transport module 14 is located directly adjacent to the process chamber 18. Since the transport device 16 is located within transport module 14, the transport device is able to deliver wafers directly to either the load lock or the process chamber.

Thus, Applicant's claimed invention allows the transport device to deliver or move wafers directly into either a load lock or a process chamber. The system in Suda et al. only allows wafers to be moved into the process chamber indirectly via the load lock. The ability

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to move wafers directly into the process chamber or indirectly from the load lock to the process chamber results in a system that is more flexible than conventional systems. In addition, by having the ability to move wafers directly into the process chamber, the chances of contamination are reduced because there are less chambers for the wafer to move into and out of before ending up in the process chamber, thereby reducing chances of contamination in these additional chambers.

Therefore, Applicant believes claim 11 is patentable over Suda.

Claims 12, 13, 18, and 19 depend on claim 11 and are thus patentable over Suda for at least the same reasons as claim 11 discussed above.

Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(a).

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 6-9, 14, 16, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suda et al. in view of Gordon et al., Beaulieu et al., and/or Moore et al.

Claim 1, as amended, recites "moving said wafer directly into said load lock or said process chamber". Consequently, for reasons similar to those provided above with respect to claim 11, claim 1 is patentable over Suda.

The Examiner cites Gordon for disclosing a FOUP device, Beaulieu for disclosing different types of process chambers, and Moore for disclosing a rapid thermal processing chamber. However, neither Gordon, Beaulieu, nor Moore remedy the deficiencies of Suda, as discussed above with respect to claim 1 and as discussed in previous responses. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over Suda et al. in view of the cited references.

Claims 2, 3, 6-9, 14, 16, and 17 depend on claims 1 and 11 and are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons as claims 1 and 11.

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Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

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CONCLUSION

For the above reasons, pending claims 1-3, 6-9 and 11-14, and 16-19 are now in condition for allowance and allowance of the application is hereby solicited. If the Examiner has any questions or concerns, the Examiner is hereby requested to telephone Applicant's Attorney at (949) 752-7040.

Certification of Facsimile Transmission	
I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on the date shown below.	
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